



BRAZIL

**THIRD COMMITTEE
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

New York, 15 October 2012

(check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

Brazil associates herself with the statements made by Algeria, on behalf of G-77 and China, and by Chile, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and would like to add the following comments in her national capacity.

In this year's General Debate, President Dilma Rousseff underscored that "the principles of tolerance, respect for differences, equality, inclusion, friendship, and understanding are also the foundation of human rights and of the United Nations". As a matter of fact, combating inequalities and advancing inclusion lie at the core of the Brazilian Government's policies.

A little more than half of the Brazilians in a situation of extreme poverty are women. They are the ones who are affected more cruelly by the lack of resources and access to public services.

But this is changing. Women are now the main beneficiaries of cash transfer programs and housing credit. 93% of the 13.5 million families in the *Bolsa Família*, a programme of income transfer in Brazil, have women as its beneficiaries.

In rural areas, at least 30% of the professionals that form the multidisciplinary teams of the *Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Programme* are women. Brazil was honored to co-sponsor the international launch of the Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women, organized by UN-Women and other partners at the sidelines of this year's General Debate.

The current administration has improved income distribution, giving priority to children, pregnant women and women in the breast-feeding stage. In May 2012, 255,000 pregnant women and women in the breast-feeding stage received a reinforcement in *Bolsa Família* benefits.

Brazil has also implemented policies aimed at raising awareness and reducing teenager pregnancy. To that end, access to information and to the free distribution of contraceptive methods have been widened. The efforts to prevent, diagnose and treat cervical and breast cancer have been increased and the measures already in place to halt the march of HIV/AIDS among women have been strengthened.

Moreover, through *Thousand Women Programme*, coordinated by the Education Ministry and implemented by the Federal Education Institutes network, women in a vulnerable situation are now gaining wider access to professional education, and therefore to jobs and income. The target is to qualify 100,000 women by 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

2011 will always be remembered, in Brazil, as a landmark in terms of gender equality and the empowerment of women. For the first time in our history, a woman took office as President, a symbolic accomplishment in its nature, but a reflection of the notable progress we have made in this area.

Nevertheless, women continue to be largely underrepresented in decision-making positions in all areas. Although they make up 52% of all Brazilian voters, only 10% of our parliament members are women. President Rousseff has made it a priority to enhance the participation of women in top decision-making levels, including in core governmental positions. Currently, women head 10 of our 38 Ministries.

While recognizing that women's political participation still does not reflect the major contribution they make to our social, political, economic and cultural development, Brazil endeavours to eliminate economic, social, cultural and political obstacles that hinder women's full participation in all spheres and levels of political life, on an equal basis with men.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Brazil strongly believes that the strengthening of international cooperation is key to the assertion of good practices in the field of advancement of women. Thus international cooperation, including its South-South dimension, should promote opportunities in that respect.

Thank you.